

## **A Message From Governor Haley Barbour**

*The third in a series of one-page updates on major issues: A Healthy Mississippi*

*"We were born in a culture where we were raised to eat wrong." - Governor Haley Barbour*

Mississippi's cardiovascular disease mortality rate is the highest in the nation, and is the leading cause of death in our state. Cancer is Mississippi's #2 killer ranking fourth in cancer mortality in the U.S. in 2004. Diabetes contributes to the deaths of 1,600 Mississippians each year. Mississippi also ranks number one - the highest in the nation - in obesity, while 81% of adult Mississippians say they are not physically active on a regular basis.

### **Isn't it time to get Healthy Mississippi?**

Last year, Governor Barbour kicked off his "Healthy Mississippi" initiative to promote disease management and improve health care at a lower cost. Now, more than ever, it is time to focus on living healthier lifestyles and raising awareness of chronic disease prevention.

#### **Wellness Where We Learn:**

- Governor Barbour proposed and the Legislature passed the "Mississippi Healthy Students Act" this year, which requires 150 minutes of physical activity-based instruction per week and 45 minutes of health education instruction for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Costs for a physical activities coordinator were also appropriated. After all, healthy kids have fewer discipline problems and will be more interested in learning.
- This legislation also established a Child Nutrition Advisory Committee to assist the State Board of Education in developing regulations regarding health and fitness. The committee will focus on healthy food choices, food preparation, and the marketing of nutritious foods.

#### **Wellness Where We Live:**

- The Barbour Administration has partnered with Blue Cross Blue Shield to promote the Let's Go Walkin' Campaign to get Mississippians active and raise awareness of the benefits of exercise.
- Nearly 23,000 packets and pedometers have been sent to individuals, churches, schools and businesses in 79 counties to serve as a tool to encourage healthy choices.
- The campaign will provide materials and resources to a network of churches statewide who are dedicated to advocating healthy lifestyles among their congregations.

### Wellness Where We Work:

- Offering wellness programs throughout state agencies is the first step in improving the overall health of state employees. To achieve this goal, the Barbour Administration has developed “Healthy Mississippi – A Worksite Wellness Program” for State Employees. It is a comprehensive program that will be customized to meet an agency’s specific needs and challenges.

*\*Statistics from the Mississippi Department of Health Web site.*

Kathryn is doing one-pager based on this.

From: Candice

To: Governor Barbour

Date: May 22, 2007

Re: Talking Points for the Department of Health’s *Empowering Communities for a Healthy Mississippi Summit*, May 23, 2007, 9:00 a.m. at the Hilton

Cc: Jim, Buddy

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The *Healthy Mississippi* initiative kicked off last June and we have made great strides in promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness about chronic disease prevention. This is an ongoing process; if we do it right Healthy Mississippi will always be work in progress. The *Healthy Mississippi* initiative examines ways to create a culture of wellness that reduces swelling healthcare cost and offers healthy choices in communities. We are continuing to work towards our goal of reducing the chronic disease burden in our state. In order to see a reduction, the underlying causes of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and stroke have to be aggressively targeted. The initiative focuses on wellness where we live, where we work, and where we learn.

### **Wellness Where We Learn**

- This past legislative session S.B. 2369, *The Mississippi Health Students Act* was passed.
- The Act requires K-8<sup>th</sup> grade to complete 150 minutes of physical activity based instruction per week and forty-five minutes of health education instruction.
- In addition, each local school board in has now adopted a wellness plan which promotes healthy lifestyles for children and staff.
- The Legislature appropriated money to employ a physical activity coordinator to assist districts on developing and implementing physical activity programs.
- This legislation also established a Child Nutrition Advisory Committee to assist the State Board of Education in developing regulations regarding good human health and fitness. The Advisory Committee will focus on increasing healthy food choices, healthy food preparation, and the marketing of healthy foods.

- Currently the Department of Education is developing resources, activities and grant opportunities to assist local school districts with the minimum requirements in the Healthy Schools Act.

### **Wellness Where We Live**

- For the past nine months, I have partnered with Blue Cross Blue Shield on the Let's Go Walkin' Campaign.
- The program is designed to educate the public about the health benefits of walking and motivate Mississippians to begin a walking regimen.
- March 20<sup>th</sup> was proclaimed Let's Go Walkin' Day. Children from two local schools (Pecan Park Elementary School in Jackson, Oakdale Elementary School in Brandon) participated and have committed to walking their way to health.
- Since the program was kicked off last October, nearly 23,000 packets and pedometers have been sent to individuals, churches, schools and businesses in 79 counties.
- This fall, the Let's Go Walkin' Mississippi school program will be introduced in four pilot school districts (Rankin, Meridian, Yazoo City and Hattiesburg), representing 16,000 elementary school children. In keeping with the healthy school legislation passed just recently, students will be encouraged to walk 30 minutes every day. Incentives will be awarded to those schools whose students walk 5,000 minutes over the course of the 2007-08 school year.
- The program will also work with a network of churches in the state to encourage walking and a healthy lifestyle. We know that churches have long been anchors of communities across Mississippi, and many churches already have dedicated, passionate health advocates among their congregation. Often, a lack of resources keeps these churches from kicking off healthy campaign, and Let's Go Walkin' Mississippi will provide the materials, expertise and support to help these churches succeed.

### **Wellness Where We Work**

- I believe that a critical first step in reaching and sustaining our goal of improving the health of State employees is to establish agency specific worksite wellness programs. To realize this vision, we have developed *Healthy Mississippi- A Worksite Wellness Program for State Employees*. This is a comprehensive guide to assist you in establishing a worksite wellness program that is customized to meet your agency's specific challenges and needs.
- This resource provides instructions and suggestions to help you get started, including a *Health Champion Toolkit* that provides a step by step guide for creating a successful program.
- This summer my office will be asking all agencies to select a Health Champion who will help distribute educational information and generate excitement among employees about the worksite wellness program.
- Once the *Health Champions* have been identified, my staff plans to conduct a training session to introduce *Healthy Mississippi- A Worksite Wellness Program for State Employees*.

I am hoping for full participation in the program.